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ABSTRACT

The Outdoor Program is part of the special education program in a Northwest U.S. junior high school that combines wilderness activities with traditional classroom activities for students with behavior disorders. The goals of the program are to help the students learn to trust each other and the teachers, to teach students how to cooperate, and to build a team that would climb Mount Ranier. Observation and interviews with students and teachers show that team building is accomplished through group identification and through individual, collaborative, and temporal aspects of team building. The teachers and students exhibited the group identification strategies of finding common ground, antithesis, and the transcendent "we." Individual aspects of team building involved individual effort, planning, and commitment. Collaborative aspects of team building required cooperation and trust. Team building was also found to be an ongoing dynamic process that changes and moves back and forth toward accomplishing a team atmosphere within the group. (Contains 18 references.) (JDD)

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Team Building through Wilderness Activities in Eighth Grade Special Education

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the team building perspectives of a somewhat unique eighth grade classroom. The "Outdoor Program" is part of the special education program in a northwest junior high school that combines wilderness activities with traditional classroom activities for behavior disordered students. These data provide evidence that for this group, identification with a group is necessary but not sufficient for team building to occur. It is through group identification, as well as the individual, collaborative, and temporal aspects of team building, revealed through the discourse of the participants, that team building gets accomplished.

In order for the team building process to occur, the participants identify with the group by finding common ground, antithesis, and the use of the transcendent we. These communicative activities allow the group to see themselves as sharing a common identity, but it is not sufficient for team building to occur. A model of team building for this group is presented incorporating individual aspects, collaborative aspects, and temporal aspects of team building as necessary components for team building to occur. Most of the team building research tends to be focused on the stages of team development, while this research looks at how individuals go through the process of becoming a team. Team building is an achievement or outcome as well as the process by which it is accomplished.

When Lee Marvin undertook the challenge of building a military unit out of a group of hardened criminals in the movie The Dirty Dozen, we all knew how it would turn out—they would be a team, a unit that would fight together to the death. Each individual developed his own potential and contributed to the functioning of the entire group. This group of men engaged in team building—they worked and acted together to create a climate where members' energies and resources were maximized and directed toward problem solving (Hanson & Lubin, 1986). Classrooms are rarely thought of as sites for team building activities, but they can be. Teachers can fill the role of Lee Marvin and students that of the "dirty dozen."

This paper presents the team building perspectives and communicative behaviors of members of a somewhat unique eighth grade classroom. The "Outdoor Program" is part of the special education program in a northwest junior high school that combines wilderness activities with traditional classroom activities for behavior disordered students. Specifically, the goals of this program are to help the students learn to trust each other and the teachers, to teach students how to cooperate, and to build a team that will climb Mt. Ranier during the summer of 1992. The purpose of this study is twofold: (1) to determine how a team atmosphere is developed in an instructional environment, and (2) to discover the participants' (teachers and students) perspectives about team building.

These data provide evidence that for this group, identification with a group is necessary but not sufficient for team building to occur. Organizational identification is both process and product of relationship development between individuals and organizations (Bullis & Bach, 1991, p. 181). It is through group identification, as well as the individual, collaborative, and temporal aspects of team building, revealed through the discourse of the participants, that team building gets accomplished. In this paper I will provide descriptions and examples of the individual, collaborative, and temporal aspects of team building as defined by this group.

This study was originally motivated by a desire to look at group talk where team building was the ultimate goal. The classroom and setting used in this study were selected based on this criterion. Mr. B has established "The Outdoor" program at Sparkway Junior High School (pseudonyms) that incorporates some concepts from "stress/challenge" and "adventure based" programming into a more traditional classroom in a public school setting. The students participate in rock climbing, overnight and extended camping experiences in wilderness settings, and day trips focused around the wilderness skills they are learning. Some of the objectives for the project, as identified by the teachers, revolve around "bonding" with other students, developing leadership skills and allowing others to assume leadership skills. Wilderness and outdoors experiences have been successful in producing "significant short-term impact on the cooperative behavior" (Sachs & Miller, 1992, p. 95) of students. The purpose of this

study is to discover what the perspectives of the participants are regarding team development in this instructional setting.

Not all groups are teams and some groups become teams almost serendipitously. Still other groups with involuntary membership, for example military units and classrooms, may find that becoming a team becomes a primary objective. Several models of team development have been suggested—goal setting, interpersonal, role model, the Managerial Grid model (Beer, 1976), and a problem solving model (Buller, 1986). All of these models place a primary emphasis on the outcome of the team, not the process by which the team comes to exist through the interactions of the participants. Typically research on teams and groups has focused on groups that have meetings on a regular basis to define and achieve goals. Team building has been defined as a technique by which group effectiveness can be improved, not as a goal in itself (Buller, 1986). This research will add to communication theory by explicating the perceptions of the group participants in the process of actualizing themselves as a team and situating these observations in how the individuals communicate about team building.

One of the explicitly stated goals of this class is becoming a team. A team is a collection of people who rely on "group collaboration if each member is to experience the optimum of success" (Dyer, 1987, p. 4). Not all individuals, however, find it easy to work in teams or even get along with others in a group environment. Many, although not all, of the students in this classroom have been designated behaviorally disordered

and are in this class primarily because they lack interpersonal skills, often display inappropriate anger, and have not developed even moderate levels of trust with others.

Belonging and being a member of various teams is an important part of the growing up process. As we mature and develop, we continue to be a part of work and recreational teams. Teams may be formed for particular purposes or existing groups of individuals may identify themselves as a team. However formed, teams come into being not because they are labeled as such, but because of the interdependent interaction of the participants themselves whose conversations and behaviors display an orientation toward the group as a team. How do members of a group characterize and perceive their identification as a team? This study will address this question. This research will specifically address the following questions:

1. What are the teachers' perspectives/goals about team building?
2. What are the students' perspectives/goals about team building?

METHODS OF PROCEDURE

To answer these questions a triangulation of methods was employed to validate particular pieces of information against other sources and methods (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Two of Mr. B's classes participate in "The Outdoor Program." First, I was a participant observer in Mr. B's last period class, a two-hour block, for two weeks or approximately twenty

hours. There are six boys and two girls in this class. Mr. B's second and third period class, another two hour block, has six boys enrolled, for a total of fourteen students in the two classes. Enrollment changes occurred during the time I conducted the interviews—one male student was asked to leave the program and one male student was suspended from school. Students from both classes participate in the outdoor activities, visit back and forth during training exercises, and participated in the interviews for this research. I made systematic notes of the nonverbal behaviors, the physical layout of the classroom, and the proxemics of students and teachers. I typed and reviewed field notes at the end of each day. I also audiotaped the class. During the period of this observation I accompanied the class on field trips and participated in outdoor training activities, such as jogging, hiking, and assisting the students while practicing rock climbing. Audiotapes were made of almost all activities. I dictated my field observations into a cassette recorder while participating in the physical activities or immediately thereafter. Mr. B frequently videotaped group activities for instructional purposes and I reviewed and transcribed these videotapes.

Following the first week of participant observation, I interviewed four boys and one girl. The interviews lasted from thirty to forty-five minutes. I conducted a second round of interviews following the second week of observation and a four day campout. During the second round of interviews I spoke with three students (two boys and one girl) I interviewed earlier and I interviewed four students (boys) for the first time.

The teacher and the teacher's aide were also interviewed. There were also several spontaneous conversations with students and teachers after school or on the telephone that were also audio recorded. The interviews were audiotaped.

The observation notes from the classroom, outdoor activities and recordings of the interviews were transcribed and coded using an open coding schema whereby the data were broken down, examined, compared, conceptualized, and categorized (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 61). All of this involved somewhat of an "ethnosemantic" approach that involved the exploration of meaning through an understanding of the semantic organization of a subject's terminology (Saville-Troike, 1989, p. 129). I read through the transcripts several times, alternating with listening to the actual recordings. I began to recognize some recurring themes in the talk of almost all the participants, the use of similar words and phrases, and references to the same activities. Using the words of the participants, I made marginal notations of these observations. I looked for commonalities and differences between students and teachers perceptions and found that perceptions of team building were similar for teachers and students.

While charting the interview data regarding team building, I found several types of responses that did not seem to "fit in." One of these groups of comments, particularly the students' negative comments about the teacher, led to me to the realization that there was also a process of group identification occurring. The students were forming a bond with each other by selecting attributes of the teachers that were unappealing to

the students as a group. This process of identifying with each other as a group was necessary for team building for the participants, but it was not sufficient. The participants' perceptions of team building provided additional requirements, but group identification was an essential and on-going. I classified the participants' perceptions of team building as individual, collaborative, and temporal aspects. Individual aspects refer to contributions that participants make on a fairly personal level, usually internally measurable, for example "trying." Collaborative aspects refer to contributions that participants make to the team building effort that require the presence or collaboration of another individual, for example "working together." The temporal aspects of team building refer to an awareness, often verbalized, that team building is a process and occurs over time.

The aspects of team building and the group identification techniques isolated in this study were tested for agreement and reliability utilizing Cohen's coefficient of agreement for nominal scales (1960). Each category resulting from the analysis of the observations and the interviews was described to another researcher. That researcher then sorted the instances of communicative activities and perspectives of team building gleaned from the observations and interviews in categories. Reliability was "interpretable as the proportion of joint judgments in which there is agreement, after chance agreement is excluded. Its upper limit is +1.00, and its lower limit falls between zero and -1.00" (p. 46). Reliability on the group identification processes was 100 per cent. Reliability on the three aspects of team building was 95 per cent per Cohen's Kappa.

This reliability measurement determined the accuracy of placing communicative events into categories, it did not ascertain the veracity of the categories themselves. Another researcher might well identify different communicative aspects to illustrate the phenomenon of team building. However, in reporting the data and the findings I have included details from the interview responses to enable the reader insight into the selection of categorical dimensions. The model presented here is based on a foundation of group identification that allows for the co-occurrence of the individual, collaborative, and temporal aspects of team building.

GROUP IDENTIFICATION

Identification with a group or organization is a dynamic process where individuals connect with other elements in the system to make sense of experiences, organize thoughts, make decisions, and ground themselves. When individuals identify with groups or organizations there is a feeling of belonging, affiliation, and similarity (Cheney, 1983). Mr. B described the "Outdoor Program" as "kind of what family is. It isn't family, but it's a feeling of belonging, a feeling of cooperation." Both teachers involved in the program talked about helping the students "feel like they're a part of something." Identification with the group or "feeling a part of" is a component of the team building process for this group, but not its totality. Team building refers to "an effort in which a team studies its own process of working together and acts to create a climate in which members' energies are directed toward problem solving and maximizing the

use of all members' resources for this process" (Hanson & Lubin, 1986, p. 29).

Cheney's (1983) discussion of identification is based in part on Burke's (1950) depiction of identification as a societal role whereby "identification is compensatory to division" (p. 22). According to Burke, individuals relate to other aspects of their life to compensate for the separation and segregation they encounter. Mr. B reported that "Many of these kids have been really alienated. They don't have any sense of belonging, they have no friends. A lot of them have no friends. They're real isolated." According to the teachers, the students experience a feeling of "security here, this is consistent, this is everyday, they really care about me, what we do, and for a lot of these kids it's the most stable thing they've got going in their lives." One of the students reported that another student "doesn't want to be kicked out of the trip, because it's like this is the only thing he has."

Identification Strategies

Three identification strategies suggested by Cheney (1983) are identification through establishing common ground, antithesis, and the transcendent "we." The common ground strategy incorporates expression of concern for the individual, recognition of individual contributions, espousal of shared values, and advocacy of benefits and activities. Identification by antithesis focuses on participants uniting against a "common enemy". The transcendent "we" appeals to identification between parties who may have little in common. The teachers and students

exhibit all three types of identification strategies, identifying themselves together as part of an effort, ostensibly team building. The transcendent we is woven throughout the talk of the teachers and the students in instances of the common ground technique and identification through antithesis.

Common Ground Strategy

The most obvious examples of common ground strategies are when a speaker "equates or links himself or herself with others in an overt manner" (Cheney, 1983, p. 148). Group identification is not always positive, however, and developing an identification with the other students in this classroom forced the students to acknowledge why they were assigned to this class. Not all of the students in this classroom are officially designated as behaviorally disordered; some were assigned to this class because they had exhibited disruptive behavior or were participating in programs related to drug and alcohol abuse outside of the school. Regardless of the reason for their being assigned to this class, they were designated "special education students" by the other members of the school, and this designation has a certain amount of stigma attached to it. One of the students said that "most people think the kids are in here because they're stupid and we don't know what we're doing, but when you get in that class it takes more work to make it through that class than it does a normal class, because you have to go on all the trips and learn about everything in a certain amount of time." Another student said this class "is more, it's not for, it's not for mentally ill people, people that don't know what they're doing. I think it's for people that don't want to do the other

classes, but can do that class better than they can do anything else." This same student went on to say, "I just consider myself as a kid, a normal kid that has a little, that was stuck in the class, but could get along with everybody else." Initially the student described the students in Mr. B's class as a group he was not affiliated with, but then went on to express membership and a connection with the group.

Another example of the common ground technique is when participants express concern for the other individuals in the program. One student expressed an awareness of the needs of some others students on the field trips, "they need like, like big kids that can do all the work, that know everything, can go up and help the kids in between when they're up in front." In recognizing the other students as individuals with special needs, sometimes students can act as a positive change agent for others, "They'll be in a bum mood and all the energy I have, I can either make them laugh or they get mad at me and chase, me. Wish they would get all their energy back and continue on." The last comment displays a concern for other individuals in the program and a desire to motivate those individuals to a higher level of involvement.

Common ground is also exemplified by recognition of the contributions of others. Although the teachers often made comments that the students were not aware of how much work went into organizing the trips, several students made comments to the contrary. One student said, "Well, Mr. B and Mr. Y put a lot of effort and money into this." Another student reported that Mr. B gets upset when he thinks students do not

appreciate how much work goes into planning the outdoor trips, "because he sits there and tells us how much work he's put in a trip and he says you guys have no idea how much work it is to put a trip—well I do, cuz I've already tried to figure it out. It takes a couple of days and that's just before the typing." These examples involve an associational process where the concerns of the students and the teachers are linked either directly or indirectly with those of the group.

Another example of common ground tactics are students and teachers recognizing appreciation for the group and some of the benefits that derive from participating in the team building efforts. "Yeah, it's just, it's just fun and Mr. B, I'm glad Mr. B made this stuff for the kids, becuz it helps us get along." "Like it helps you meet other people when you don't know them, but you don't get in trouble if you say something stupid." "Well, in this class, you can go off and meet different people. Because when we had that girl come on our trip, G, we were, nobody was afraid to stay away from her because they didn't know her. That class, like it helps you meet other people when you don't know them, but you don't get in trouble if you say something stupid." The teachers say, "the number one thing is can they learn to get along. Can they develop some friendships, can they feel better about school, can they get to a point where they see what we're doing is positive, can they recognize some of the changes that are going on in themselves."

Common ground can also be established when individuals recognize common goals and values. The participants also spoke of how

they interpreted the norms and values of the group, and in several instances incorporated them as their own. "I think the goal in this class is for everybody to get to learn how to work as a team, that's why one of our goals is that, to work as a team. Because if we don't work as a team, when we grow up and get out to high school and stuff we won't, you're going to, somebody's going to have to help this guy do his work and if you don't like working as a team so you're going to get in trouble." The transcendent "we" is used throughout this comment that also expresses the individual student's adoption of the program's goals.

The students also gave several examples of how they identified with the teachers. "Mr. Y's like one of us, but just grown up. He likes to do the same things as us and there'll be times when he'll just call up some kids and just invite 'em out to his house. And we go out there and go fishing and stuff. He's like a kid stuck in a man's body." "Mr. B won't sit there and listen to a whole conversation, but uh, like one time C wanted to talk to Mr. B and Mr. B says, 'be quiet, be quiet, shut up, be quiet, get out of the class, I'm writing you up for ISS,' you know. I mean, it was a question for Mr. B. I mean, he won't listen to hardly anybody—he has a problem with listening—the same as all of us do."

Identification by Antithesis

Identification utilizing the strategy of common group is an associational tactic, but identification can also occur when individuals unite against a common "enemy." By dissociating from one target, an association may be implied with another. The students in this classroom,

by uniting in their criticism of one of the teachers, provide a framework under which they can unite together as a "team." The antithesis demonstrated by these students is not an overt form of "us vs them," but rather a recognition by all that Mr. B talks too much, does not want to be interrupted, often has to be the disciplinarian, and that they can support each other when subjected to his long-winded monologues. Every student I interviewed commented in some way or another about mild feelings of animosity toward Mr. B. "Mr. B always does that, he always blames somebody else." When asked how they would change the campouts several students said "Not take Mr. B." Another student said, "I'd keep Mr. B, I'd just change his attitude, because he doesn't give you, he takes forever to talk. And then when you try to ask something back, he says you're talking back or he doesn't want to hear you talk right now, or you're out of line, and then he'll write you up or give you detention or he'll send you out in the hall. Which you can sit out in the hall and you don't learn anything anyways because he'll talk." One student reported that "we're sitting on our last trip and he (Mr. B) talked and he talked. He must have talked about a half an hour, and you, when you can't stand in one place in the snow cuz you get cold because the cold goes right through your feet. We all had frozen feet cuz from standing there for that long in the snow." "He'll talk. He'll sit there and when we sit in class, he'll talk for two hours." Mr. B. "sat there and gave us a 45 minute story on one thing which he could have finished in 5 minutes. So we got stuck with our paper. We had to do it the next day." One incident that several students

reported was when Z went to sharpen his pencil and the sharpener failed to work, Mr. B accused Z of breaking the sharper. "We're all trying to sit there and tell Mr. B that Z, he didn't stick nothin' in there; opened it up and the the gears were broke or something." Mr. B seems aware of the students' attitude toward to him, saying "I have to take the hard nosed end of things all time with them.. . they love you, but they hate you at the same time."

Group identification is the process by which group members are able to find ways to feel a sense of belonging and being a part of the team. For the participants in this study, identification strategies included finding common ground, identifying through antithesis, and use of the transcendent we in talk about the group efforts. Identification with the group was essential for team building for these participants, but it was not sufficient; there were additional aspects of team building for the members of this group.

PERCEPTIONS OF TEAM BUILDING

Throughout the interviews, the classroom observations, and the outdoor activities I found examples of talk that exhibited group identification. However, it was also clear that merely identifying together as a group was not sufficient to create an atmosphere of team building. I asked the students and teachers, "What does it mean to be a part of a team to you?" "Do you really think that you are a part of team in here? Why? Why not?" "What is different about this class than other classes?" What is the hardest part about working with people in this class?" "If you could

design a camping trip, how would you do it?" The answers to these questions provided insight into how the participants in "The Outdoor" program perceived team building. The interviews were unstructured in that interviewees were encouraged to follow their own avenues of thought, rather than rigidly being forced to adhere to a set questions. Some of these tangential responses offered some interesting personal insights into perceptions of team building in this instructional setting. I identified three major aspects of team building for these students and teachers: individual, collaborative, and temporal.

Individual Aspects of Team Building

The individual aspects of team building require a personal, internal measurement to determine if they are present, although they may be manifested behaviorally or communicatively. The participants were able, in some cases, to offer behavioral manifestations of these individual characteristics,but for the most part they were subjectively defined. Individual processes were also something the participant made a decision about alone, and often did not share verbally with other classmates. These were personal motivations of the individual student. Personal motivations have been described as a team building force within the individual that can lead to higher achievement, personal development and individual fulfillment (Zenger & Miller, 1974). Typically, only one participant was required for this to be accomplished. Some of the individual processes suggested as components of teambuilding were "trying", "commitment", and "planning."

Individual Effort

Each team member must expend time and effort to create a well-functioning team (Hanson & Lubin, 1986). Even though the members of a team are doing individual tasks, each person must complete his or her work for the accomplishment of a team effort. For some of the students in this class giving up or quitting is their normal behavior. A student reported, "there's one time I went back to the van because I couldn't make it, but I didn't try...and so I've been trying all the time because I don't want to go to ISS (Internal School Suspension) anymore." Not only do individuals need to be aware of their own expenditure of energy into the team effort, but Larson and LaFasto (1989) found that team members wanted other individuals to be willing to put more personal time and energy into the group effort. Several students in this study also reported that others did not seem to put a lot of energy into the collective effort. A student reported, "There will be kids that, they always, they'll either take their time and they won't do it or they'll stand there and cuss at you and say they're not going to do it." The students who do feel they put a lot of effort into the group are frustrated, because this level of energy is an individual aspect and cannot be supplied by other members of the group.

Planning

Part of working a team is that you show up with your supplies and ready to work. Being prepared requires a certain amount of planning and forethought. Mr. B says that "with most of these kids there's no advance planning. There's no thinking ahead. Their lives have never been geared

toward a plan, you think about things, you get your stuff together." Although Mr. B's comments indicate that the students are frequently unprepared for the outings, the students made comments that indicate they are at least aware that planning is necessary for being able to participate in group activities. The students commented on "having to plan ahead" in this class and not always being able "to put stuff off becuz you'll get on a trip and you won't be ready. It's not like not doing your homework or somethin."

One of the students had actually assisted in setting up one of the trips. He said, "I typed it all out and everything and had Mr. B take a look at it. Figured out the cost that it would cost us eight bucks because 25 cents per mile for the vans and then we have two vans, that's 50 cents and figuring on 14 kids and we're going to go like two hours, was it one way or both ways, but we were going to go all the way up to Snoqualmie, dig a snow cave, sleep in there, and then have breakfast. Dinner we supply, you know, the teachers supply, and all we have to do is supply the lunch." During a class discussion Mr. B said, "You guys have no idea what goes into all of this." The student who had assisted in planning the trip was bouncing in his desk, saying, "I do! I do! I did it once!"

Commitment

Another requirement for successful team building is a "joint decision" or all members agreeing to participate (Weisbord, 1988, p. 35). From Mr. B's perspective, "One of the most difficult things for these kids is that they're used to being couch potatoes. They're used to not

committing. They're used to not following through. They're used to not doing anything that takes any effort or energy." In studying organizational work teams, Dyer (1987) found that the first step in the team building intervention was "getting people's commitment to participate in the team building program" (p. 58). One of the characteristics of classrooms is that being there is not voluntary; students are assigned to classes and it is required by law that young people attend school. A sense of commitment from these students must occur at an intensely personal and internal level, and the teachers and other team members must overcome the students' initial resistance to just being a part of any school program, not this program in particular.

In response to what participants do that interfere with team building, several students replied "They say I don't want to go." "They'll make up excuses and, um that happens almost every day, but um, we've always had a problem with kids not wanting to really cooperate to listen to some of Mr. B's advice." Another student said, "We did have kids that didn't want to go a lot." The class members appear to have an awareness that wanting to be there and committing to the team effort by participating enhances the team building efforts.

"There are people who don't want to be in the program. They don't like the trips. They're not real into the stuff because we do a lot of work. I mean, it's lots harder than the other classes. . . . There's a lot more commitment that goes into it. Well, you can't just go out there and hope you learn the ice axe. You just can't go out there and hang out. Your life

depends on it." These comments from one student depict an awareness of the personal commitment required for involvement in this class and wilderness activities. "Just hanging out" is more like what Senge (1990) calls grudging compliance, not commitment. Grudging compliance occurs when the participants do not see the benefits of the team effort, but they do not want to get in trouble with the administration, so they do just enough, but let it be known they are not participating one hundred percent. The lowest possible attitude toward being part of a team is grudging compliance, next is formal compliance where the participant "sees the benefits of the vision. Does what's expected and no more" (p. 219). The next level is genuine compliance where the participants see the benefits of team building, do what is expected and a little more. The next level is what Senge calls "enrollment." The participant wants to be involved in the team building effort and will do whatever is possible to be there and be a part of the group. The top level is "commitment" where the participant wants to contribute to team building, and will work to create situations that will allow it to happen. The students' report reveal a great deal of grudging compliance on the part of the class members and a desire for a higher level of commitment from their peers.

When students were asked about how they would improve the outings several comments centered around including only those students who wanted to participate. "I'd bring people who want to go." "This last trip was good because we didn't have kids that didn't want to go a lot."

During classroom observations I also heard two students say, "I ain't goin."

On the part of the teachers, personal commitment gets exemplified in their willingness to spend their free time participating in activities with the students, and working with the parents to make sure that the students are ready for the campouts. Mr. Y said, "I like to have them come out to my house a lot. Yeah, I like to go climb Spire Rock a lot after school and stuff, which I do it a couple of times a week."

Collaborative Aspects of Team Building

Collaborative aspects of team building require participation of more than one group member. These characteristics can be either negative or positive and include concepts like trusting, sharing, cooperating, taking turns, helping, and resolving disagreements. Zenger and Miller (1974) identified these as interpersonal effects or forces within an organization than influence positive personal motivation.

Cooperation

Being in the outdoors has increased student awareness for the need to cooperate. "See, I don't cooperate too well," said one student, "rock climbing I cooperate constantly cuz that's dealing with each other's lives, you know, so I cooperate with that pretty well." Mr. Y commented that on "this last ski trip, we got up there in the dark, it seemed like we worked as team. We got water, we got the tents up, we got everything ready. Yeah, there was, I had to scream several times about getting all the food, but that's part of these kids. They're out doing things and stuff like that."

Another student said, "Yeah, in camping trips we help cook, help snow caves, and everything." Organizational members who have participated in wilderness training as a part of team development also report experiencing "a deep mutual commitment to each other's safety" (Long, 1987, p. 31). The wilderness offers individuals and groups ways to "test their limitations, explore new ways of interacting, and build powerful support networks" (p. 31). In a study with behaviorally disordered adolescents in a mental health facility, "the wilderness program was found to have a significant impact on the cooperative behaviors" of the participants (Sachs & Miller, 1992, p. 97).

Dailey (1977) presented a theoretical model to explain organizational group productivity. "Cohesiveness and collaboration were identified as co-determinants of group productivity and affective responses of group members" (p. 461). Collaboration was defined as cooperation; cohesiveness was defined as an individual's desire to remain in the group. Four teams were identified: (1) low cohesion and low collaboration, (2) high cohesion, low collaboration, (3) low cohesion, high collaboration, and (4) high cohesion and high collaboration. The low cohesion and collaboration teams were described as "impoverished" that "would demonstrate a weak sense of mutual attraction, low intermember respect, and low levels of trust" (p. 465). The suggestion for organizations with these types of teams is that they be disbanded and re-formed with new members. In school classrooms, this is not possible. Teachers must work with the students assigned to the class. The challenge of the team building

efforts in this class is to take a low cohesive, low collaboration group and develop a team atmosphere.

When I asked the students how they knew if they were becoming a team, one reported a change in another student's behavior while rock climbing, "We kept on taking turns, but usually he'll sit down on a rock, belay, and he'll look around, or he'll grab the rope and he'll stand up and walk over to the other people, sit with them and talk, and he won't pay attention." Another student said, "there was a lot of sharing in terms of the snow caves, in terms of helping one another."

"Interpersonal relations" or the extent to which team members can effectively relate to each other was one of seven components of effective teams (Huszczo, 1990). One student said he thought the goal of this class was to "try to work together, because he [the teacher] wants us all—that's why we're in that, he wants us all to like group together so we can like trust each other cuz our main goal is to climb the summit of Mt. Rainier." Mr. B said that, "one of the biggest parts are the social interactive things, the ability to get along." Mr B said that his "goal is for these kids, to see them learn to cooperate together, that's real important to me, to see them get along, to treat each other with some kindness and love."

The students also evaluate the teachers' ability to cooperate. Mr. Y was described by a student as, "he really cooperates quite a bit and that's why the kids really like him, because he'll sit there and cooperate and listen to the whole sentence before he makes a statement or anything." This

definition of cooperation involves communicative behaviors, rather than focusing on wilderness activities.

The teachers work together also. They have a kind of team within the team. Mr. Y said that, "once a night I usually call Mr. B. I call him and talk to him. I feel like teachers have to work together." Mr. B commented that, "We now are developing a sense of conscience, the idea of becoming a team. And what is that—what it really means is a sense of, you know, relationship, a sense of accountability to one another and to the group."

Trust

Trust is also an important component of the collaborative aspects of team building for this group. To one student being a part of a team "is trusting each other's life, that's mostly just trust, that's all a team really means to me." Another student said, "I feel like a team, but I can't really trust so many kids. And see, I can trust S. I'm still having a hard time trusting Z; C is a little bit on the weak side too, I can't really trust him too much." Trust can be a primary contributor to a collaborative climate (Larson & LaFasto, 1989). "Trust allows team members to stay problem-focused" (p. 88), without diverting attention to suspicion or conflict. One of the students in responding to the question, "How do you know when you're starting to be a team?", said, "I mean, cuz it's simple. Right now, we're going through a problem of trusting each other. This couple of weeks before, somebody ripped off Mr. B's camera. . . So that was, that's where we, we had a pretty good team, but now I think there's not a point in

everything. So therefore we're losing our team effort and our friendship over that."

Trust allows for the energy of the participants to be focused on communication and coordination (Larson and LaFasto, 1989). Because the students did not know, or were unwilling to divulge who stole the camera, communication was guarded, ambiguous, and often difficult to understand. Time was spent on the outings as well as in the classroom discussing the missing camera. This time took away from the efforts to collaborate and focus on the team as building a cohesive unit.

Trust means different things to different people. In this group of students it means different things to the boys than to the girls. Trust to the boys in the program means being physically capable and following through in helping another. To the one girl who was interviewed (there are only two girls in the program) trust means maintaining and respecting a confidence. One female student said, "I trust Mr. B, but sometimes you have to watch out what you say because he might tell the whole class." There are also different levels of trust. Several students said they would trust each other to belay them on the mountain or with their life, but would not trust other students with money or personal belongings.

Collaboration within the group "refers to the extent to which members communicate openly, disclose problems, share information, help each other overcome obstacles, and discover ways of succeeding. Collaborative climate is the essence of teams; it *is* the teamwork" (Larson & LaFasto, 1989, p. 94). Collaboration and trust appear to be developing

among the students. They are aware of the process, but evidently it is not something they discuss with each other. "We have a strong bond and people don't see it, the kids don't see it, but half of them don't like to admit it. Like me and J we have a strong bond and we trust each other, we don't like to admit it. I'm just starting to trust people like A, C, and R." Another student said, "There's only one kid that I'd trust out of the whole class much, and that's S."

Several students talked about collaborative efforts in the classroom. In Mr. B's class "you can get in there and everybody else is helping you, and you can also help everybody else if you have the answers. In your other classes you turn around and ask somebody to help you, you get yelled at; in this one if they ask you for help, you tell the teacher. He'll either say it's ok or it's easy enough for them to do it on their own and then he will help them if they can't do it." A team to one of the students is "a group of people working together. We work together. We write our papers together. Sometimes we do it individually, but sometimes we group up."

The students identify the collaborative aspects of team building as being crucial for team building to occur. The students are also able to see the relationship of collaborative efforts in the classroom and in wilderness activities. These collaborative activities include cooperation, working together, and developing trust.

Temporal Aspects of Team Building

The process of team building occurs over time. The teachers and students are aware that this process is ongoing. As one student said, "We're becoming more a team, but it's just taking us a while. We're getting there slowly."

Mr. B and the teacher's aide speak of not expecting to see results or change for a number of years. Mr. B said, "So I can't, you know you expect all this major improvement in this short period of time. You expect too much too quick, you know I feel if we can make some progress with a couple of kids." Mr. Y feels that progress and results may not evident right away. He said, "within five years, I think these kids, I'm not looking for next year or the year after. I'm kind of like waiting until these kids get out of school and then they'll start coming back and starting talking to me I think." Another comment by Mr. B was, "I want it to happen over night, it takes 2 to 3 years, you've seen some progress, and in a period of 3 years I think we can make some real progress."

Part of the team building process involves just getting to know each other better. A student commented on the time it takes to get to know each other: "At the beginning of the school year nobody knew anybody and nobody would listen. And now, because we'd go to the rock and maybe three of us would climb and all the rest will sit down and the teachers will have to belay. Now everybody knows everybody and they're not afraid to go up to somebody and ask them to belay them cuz usually it would be, I

don't know that person so I won't ask them. But since everybody knows each other its' a lot easier to make a team out of it than usual."

Another way that the temporal aspects of team building were portrayed was in how progress is noted. The teachers report on the progress of individual students as being a slow process, "L doesn't exhibit as much [anger] as he used to. He got angry one time on the trip...He was sitting right back here, he took his foot and pushed the seat, and he got teary, and the tears started welling up, he said he just got real tired of R calling him a cheater." Mr. Y said, "The first time I met Z he wouldn't even shake my hand." Talking about another student, Mr. B reported, "S has made a lot of progress, he kept doing things, he got in a lot of fights in the last year, probably 15-18 fights. People would call him names and he would go to pieces."

Particularly in groups where participation is not voluntary, the temporal aspects of team building become paramount. If members do not want to be there, it is going to take time to develop an attitude of willingness on the part of the participants. The participants who are already committed to the team building process must be encouraged to continue team building activities and not be influenced by negative behavior, while not losing sight of the others who have not reached that point.

CONCLUSION

Team building to this group of students and teachers requires identification with the group, accomplished through communicative strategies of developing common ground, antithesis, and the transcendent

we. The students and teachers in this eighth grade classroom have similar perspectives on team building; the wilderness activities provide an avenue for these perspectives to get accomplished. These communicative activities allow the group to see themselves as sharing a common identity, but it is not sufficient for team building to occur. This group identified individual aspects, collaborative aspects, and temporal aspects of team building as necessary components for team building to occur.

By identifying this group's perspectives on team building this research contributes to the literature on team building offering a model of how team building is accomplished in a classroom. Most of the team building research tends to be focused on the stages of team development in organizational settings where the participants come together for a particular task. This research looks at how individuals go through the process of becoming a team in an environment where the participants do not elect to be involved, but rather must develop a sense of identification and belonging that will allow them to work together. This research also provides evidence that team building is not a fait accompli, rather an on-going dynamic process that changes and moves back and forth toward accomplishing a team atmosphere within a group. Team building is an achievement as well as the process by which it is accomplished.

For practitioners in instructional settings working with groups of students who have been targeted as problems, this research provides some incentive for implementing nontraditional programs This research also presents the viewpoint of the students in the special education program,

giving them an outlet and providing a voice for students who often feel that "nobody wants us anywhere."

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